

ZYGOTE

Zygote's feelings of paranoia continue as he muses over Uncle Sam's latest online power trip and squints at the strange life forms trying to reach him through his computer screen

BUGS RIFE

There are two interesting things about the thrips louse. The first is that the plural of thrips is thrips, which must be very confusing for the wee beasts when they get together for a gossip. The second interesting thing is that the thrips louse has developed the ability to penetrate LCD computer screens. It normally feeds by puncturing the surface of a creature or a plant, and then sucking up the available nutrients. But recently, alarming numbers of thrips have taken to penetrating the polymer coatings of monitors and feasting on yummy liquid crystal diodes.

There's not a lot you can do if your monitor becomes host to a thrips louse, apart from stare at the little bugger for hour after hour in backlit silhouette. If you're lucky, it will get bored after a few days and crawl off to the edge of the screen and disappear. But if you are unlucky, it will go and die slap bang in the middle of your display and necessitate an expensive replacement. Cleaning the surface of the screen is useless, and any attempt at digging out the thrips is invariably disastrous.

But never fear, help is at hand. Zygote has discovered that there are predatory mites that feast on thrips. It should be simple for manufacturers to preinstall them as a customer service. Apparently, you need just a few hundred

predatory thrips mites to colonise all the liquid crystal diodes that make up a 17in monitor. The mites may affect your viewing pleasure, but they can be eradicated easily by introducing harlequin ladybirds into your system.

You should be careful, though, because harlequin ladybirds are aggressive and have been known to attack humans. Still, you can get rid of ladybirds by feeding them to wasps, and wasps are easy to deal with if they become a nuisance, either by smoking them out or by running around waving your arms in the air and yelling. Come to think of it, if you find yourself looking at a thrips embedded in your screen, why not short-circuit the process and go straight to the running, waving and yelling bit?

ICANNOT

Even the most blinkered jackass in the American administration realises the United States has suffered enormous damage in the global battle for hearts and minds, thanks to a failed international policy, dependent on aggressive force of arms. And shite country music, of course. But while the eyes of the world were turned elsewhere, the superpower has become more determined than ever to appropriate for itself what was once an international democracy. We're talking about the internet.

Just when it seemed that ICANN, the internet's non-profit overseeing organisation, was about to shake off American ambitions, the US Department of Commerce has declared that it has unilaterally amended and approved a hugely suspect contract for ownership of all dotcom domains and has awarded the registry to the current owner, VeriSign, until 2012. In a fundamental change to the contract, the US government controls the budget on dotcom price rises, and has also given itself the right to award VeriSign renewal of its ownership of the registry in 2012. In other words, Uncle Sam has effectively gained the power to decide the future of the most important online properties globally, depending on "the public interest". That refers to what it thinks is best for the American public, naturally. Zygote reminds readers that ICANN was supposed to become autonomous and free from US control in 2009.

But not any more. The future of global website registration and renewal has been stitched up by a small bunch of Washington Congressmen, who have made VeriSign their poodle and legislated to keep it so, begging for scraps and rolling over when commanded. The Americans will not give up their usurped power in 2012 and Zygote is forced to admit that other global powers such as China,

India, Europe and Brazil have already left it too late to challenge them. The internet will fragment; the world had its chance and blew it. Meanwhile...

HELL NO MOTO

The global electronics war has just opened a second front, with the Korean giant Samsung trying to oust the US giant Motorola throughout the developing world. Last year, Motorola declared it would introduce its mobile phones in poor countries at seemingly impossible prices, often at far less than \$50. The way the dollar has fallen lately, that could be under £25. This year, Samsung is also attacking the \$50 market "to pre-empt new opportunities" knowing that it won't be profitable.

This is not a particularly original strategy. Drug dealers use it all the time. To create your new market, you start off selling as cheaply as possible, but as soon as you've hooked your junkies you can hike your prices, because the dumb bastards will pay whatever you demand. The market for mobile telephony is already saturated in the developed world, with most households owning two or even three mobiles. Yet gullible consumers are still prepared to hand over hundreds of dollars, euros and pounds for another little piece of kit that has been dressed up with idiot gimmicks to disguise the fact that it is just as poxy as the mobile phone that they already own.

In the developing world, spending power simply does not exist to be squandered on overpriced mobiles. But it will, and Samsung has joined battle with Motorola for future colonisation. Zygote predicts that the prices for both brands' products in this country will remain ludicrously high because, as consumer junkies, we are already hooked. ☑

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230: WI-FI ZONES



The concept of wireless hot-spots for non-specialist use is a fairly recent phenomenon



And wireless connections can sometimes pose a serious security risk.



So you should always use back-up protocols when accessing the net in public places.